

# COMPACT *for* LEARNING

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**THE PLAN FOR PARTICIPATION IN  
SCHOOL-BASED PLANNING AND  
SHARED DECISION MAKING**

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**THE HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
FARRAGUT AVENUE,  
HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON, NY 10706**

**ADOPTED BY  
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2008**

## What Is the Compact for Learning?

The Compact for Learning is a guiding document for shared planning and decision making within the school district. The primary focus of the Compact is to improve the educational experience for all students in the school, regardless of such factors as socioeconomic status, race, sex, language background, or disability.

We value our partners in education and our Compact reflects how we work together as a school community to abide by the commissioner's regulation. In our District, we call our shared decision making teams BLTs: Building Leadership Teams. There is a team in each school, operating under the leadership of the school principal. The Compact for Learning is the document that provides the guidelines and ground rules for these teams.

## Mission of the Hastings-on-Hudson School District

The Hastings-on-Hudson Union Free School District serves the needs of the community and is instrumental in shaping its future. The District is committed to the belief that all children are capable of learning and making a meaningful contribution to society. Through its partnership with parents, community, administration, faculty, staff and students, the District creates an environment enabling all individuals to perform at their best. The District's mission is threefold:

- To develop the knowledge, understanding and skills which form the basis for lifelong learning.
- To cultivate the attitudes and values necessary to function in a rapidly changing and diverse society.
- To provide the optimum environment to promote lifelong learning.

The District will provide programs that will enable students to survive in a rapidly changing world, function in harmony with the environment, live cooperatively in society, exercise critical judgment, appreciate the arts, and develop principles by which to guide their actions and values by which to measure them.

The District will provide a rigorous, interactive, supportive learning environment where students will be encouraged to think critically, set goals and work toward them, and take positive risks. Recognizing the uniqueness of each person and the diversity of the community, the district will educate students to participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the community and the world, to be adaptable and discriminating, and to be responsible for their own actions.

# Components of the Compact for Learning

Regulation 100.11 of the State Department of Education Commissioner requires that the District's plan for shared decision-making, or Compact for Learning, must include six specific components. The District Planning Committee agreed to include the following areas to comply with the regulation:

- I. Educational issues subject to shared decision making
- II. Involvement of all parties, as outline in the Compact
- III. Means and standards used to evaluate student performance
- IV. Accountability of team members for decisions
- V. Process for dispute resolution
- VI. Coordination of state and federal requirements for parental involvement

## I. Educational issues subject to shared decision making

Each BLT (Building Leadership Team) will have the authority to implement decisions which affect only their building and which do not conflict with law or Board of Education policy. Examples of educational issues subject to shared decision making may include, but are not limited to the following.

### CURRICULAR AREAS WHICH MAY BE CONSIDERED

- Innovations
- Student Assessment
- Goals/Outcomes
- Integration of Curriculum
- Grade Level Articulation of Outcomes
- Staff Development
- Scheduling at Building Level
- Course Offerings
- Funding (discretionary funds)
- Mandates/Variations

### OTHER AREAS WHICH MAY BE CONSIDERED

- Rules of conduct/behavior
- School climate: processes for effective staff/parent/student/  
community relationships
- Use of Space

## II. Involvement of all parties, as outline in the Compact

To comply with the commissioner's regulation, each BLT will be composed from the following groups, led by the building principal. Due the different needs of each school or building (elementary, middle school, high school) the membership needs may vary. Every effort will be made to have a full complement of team makeup; however the BLT will have the ability to perform its duties with less than the optimal composition. On occasion, a BLT may invite an additional member to advise or observe, at the discretion of the team. The term of office for each member will be two years, with applications for new membership accepted in the spring of each school year.

### A. Membership of BLTs (Building Leadership Teams)

ELEMENTARY	MIDDLE	HIGH SCHOOL
Principal	Principal	Principal
Assistant Principal*	Assistant Principal*	Assistant Principal*
2 Teachers	2 Teachers	2 Teachers
2 Parents	2 Parents	2 Parents
1 Non-instructional Staff Member	1 Non-instructional Staff Member	1 Non-instructional Staff Member
2 Students*	2 Students*	2 Students

\* In an advisory or observatory capacity, when invited.

### B. Selection process for each component group represented in BLTs

#### TEACHERS

On an annual basis, the HTA (Hastings Teachers Association) will solicit volunteers from its membership.

#### PARENTS

On an annual basis, the executive boards of both PTSA and SEPTA will solicit parent volunteers through the use of broadcast email, PTSA and District and websites. A selection committee consisting of 3 PTSA members and 3 SEPTA members will review the applicants. Parents should submit a letter of interest to the committee stating:

1. why you would like to serve on the BLT
2. any previous volunteer or paid experience in the school district
3. any other relevant volunteer, paid and/or professional experience
4. age(s) & grade(s) of your children.

#### NON-INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

A representative from each school will be encouraged to participate.

#### HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Applications for membership will be submitted and screened by members of the faculty and administration. Selected applicants will be interviewed by the Student Union and its advisor. Finalists will be elected by the student body or selected by the Student Union.

### **C. Roles and Responsibilities of each Building Leadership Team**

1. The primary focus of the team's work shall be to improve the educational needs and interests of our students.
2. Each team member will respect the spirit and intent of The Compact for Learning.
3. Teams will communicate via newsletter, broadcast emails, principal's newsletter, etc. The manner and frequency of regular communication may vary among BLTs and will be at the discretion of each team.
4. Minutes of meetings will be archived within the central office of the District and available on the District website.
5. Committee members will actively support decisions reached by the committee.
6. Regular attendance at meetings is required. Each BLT is empowered to remove a committee member for excessive absence.
7. Each BLT will publicly report to the community twice yearly at meetings of the Board of Education. Progress reports on goals and objectives will be presented.

### **D. Terms of office for members of Building Leadership Teams**

The school principal will lead each team. Teachers, parents, and non-instructional staff members will served two-year terms. When a committee member leaves before completing his/her term, a replacement will be selected following the established procedure of each component group. Students members will serve as listed below.

#### **HIGH SCHOOL**

Students will serve two-year terms, alternating completion of terms with the possibility of repeating once. Elections will be held prior to June 1st to determine membership for the subsequent school year.

#### **MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Students will neither be elected nor appointed to the team. However, they may be invited by the BLT in response to specific topics being addressed.

#### **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

As in the middle school, students will neither be elected nor appointed to the team. However, they may be invited by the BLT in response to specific topics being addressed.

#### **E. Ground Rules**

1. The District will provide the resources for training in consensus decision-making, other aspects of team membership, and the implementation of the Compact for Learning. The principal will file a confirmation of completion of training to the central office.
2. A consensus decision making model will be used by each building level team.
3. By the end of September, each team will meet to establish its meeting schedule and review goals and objectives for the year.
4. Each team will actively solicit input and expertise as needed.

#### **F. Role of the District Compact for Learning Committee**

1. The Superintendent will convene a meeting with the District Compact for Learning Sub-committee, whose charge is to meet at least once every two years to review and, if necessary, revise the District Compact for Learning. The Compact will be submitted to the Board of Education for recertification, which is required biannually by the commissioner's regulation.
2. If a Building Leadership Team determines that a component of the Compact is not working, they can request a meeting of the District Compact for Learning Sub-committee by a written notification to the Superintendent.

### **III. Means and standards used to evaluate student performance**

The district's student learning standards are aligned to New York State Curriculum guidelines as established by the New York State Education Department. To this end, the district participates in required state assessment and testing programs on an annual basis to measure student performance in grades 3-12. In addition, the district and individual schools use a combination of local assessments and national assessments to measure student performance. Results of assessments are shared with students, parents, colleges, members of the Hastings community, and the New York State Department of Education. The district will provide ongoing training and resources to help Building Leadership Team members understand how each assessment provides valuable information regarding student performance at the classroom, grade-level, and building levels.

#### **EXAMPLES OF ASSESSMENT METHODS**

- Authentic assessment: performance testing
- Portfolios
- Standardized norm-referenced tests (individual and group)
- Criterion-referenced tests
- Report cards
- Surveys
- Attendance data
- Teacher anecdotal records
- Regents scores
- Other valid and reliable data

**Each building committee must:**

1. Develop goals and standards expressed in terms of student outcomes.
2. Develop a process to achieve these outcomes.
3. Specify the resources needed to implement the goals and standards and evaluate the results. If resources are not available, the goal may need revision
4. Evaluate the outcomes.
5. Review existing resources and, if necessary, re-allocate resources to address needs identified by the committee.
6. Develop and present proposals for additional funding to support newly identified needs.
7. Formally present and distribute the final evaluations to the Board of Education and the public at large.

**IV. Accountability of team members for decisions**

Each Building Leadership Team will set goals for the year, be responsible for assessing them, identify areas of achievement, and make recommendations for improvement.

**V. Process for dispute resolution**

1. Every good faith effort should be made to resolve the question within the building team.
2. If a decision cannot be reached within the group, mediators will be selected from other Building Leadership Teams to help resolve the conflict. Mediators will be selected randomly from volunteer members of other teams.
3. If a decision cannot be mediated, a panel made up of members from the District's Compact for Learning Sub-committee will arbitrate the dispute. The arbitration panel will be established at the beginning of the year. Anyone who is party to a dispute cannot be a member of the arbitration panel. The decision of the panel will be by consensus and will be binding.

**VI. Coordination of state and federal requirements for parental involvement**

1. Parental involvement in planning and decision making as required by state or federal regulation shall be coordinated by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee as listed herein.
2. All decisions made by the BLTs will be consistent with state and federal regulations requiring the involvement of parents in planning and decision making (e.g. Chapter I and Special Education.)